

## ENCOURAGE GILBERT WILSON IN HIS MURAL PAINTING

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School officials say there has been no opposition to Wilson painting his murals and that he has been encouraged here in every way possible in his effort to win a Guggenheim scholarship.

## INDIANA MURALIST

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Thus far Wilson has done only two murals, both for Terre Haute schools. The first aroused controversy. The second displeased the artist himself and one night he wiped it out after which he completed something that now tends to satisfy his craving for expression. This summer he is to do the murals

for the convention hall of the Spink hotel at Lake Wawasee and after that he sees stretching before him almost endless possibilities for activity in Indiana.

Wilson's artistic schooling has been marked by an unwillingness to conform. He went to Mexico a

a few years ago and it was inevitable that what Rivera was doing should make a deep impression upon him. The two Terre Haute murals have something of the Rivera touch. Later he was amazed by the Orozco murals, but apparently there is no yearning on his part to become a disciple of either school. He is quoted as saying that he intends to live in Terre Haute, and that out of this part of the nation will come something both wholesome and good, for "here lie the richest possibilities for an indigenous culture, and all the more significant because of its humble origin and obscurity." Wilson has a passion to paint murals for all the Indiana educational institutions. He would have the people of his state follow the trend in Mexico and "build great chapels in connection with these schools and appropriate walls for the murals I hope to create." Unlike Benton, Grant Wood and some of the other middle western mural painters in technique, Wilson does seem to have in common with them a desire not merely to paint a series of pictures, but an overwhelming obsession to paint a social and political philosophy.

## ART

### Gilbert Wilson's Murals at Woodrow Wilson School

Last Tuesday a delightful surprise awaited me at the Woodrow Wilson School. Little did I realize when I came at Miss Nola William's invitation to see the exhibit, (more of that at another time) that I would be able to have a talk with Gilbert Wilson. I did not even count on being able to see the murals he has been working on. I thought he was working in solitude, perhaps even behind canvas partitions. Many artists desire to work undisturbed, but still I should have known them better than to have thought that, at least in the United States, temperament would have found comfort only in absolute seclusion. And so though I should not have been, I was surprised when I walked into the main entrance to see the finished mural on the north wall, and the almost finished one on the south wall.

I learned that not only did Gilbert Wilson work in the open where the children can see him, (he enjoys visitors of all ages) but he lets them talk to him, ask questions which he turns back to them for answers and reactions. Here is an opportunity rarely given children—600 lucky children! Club women, avail yourselves of seeing a mural in production, done by Terre Haute's own most promising mural painter. The children are not slow in availing themselves of this opportunity. The knock at the door is heard, and there is much response. Eager children watch him at work. They talk of what he is doing, follow him to the cafeteria, sit at his table.—all eyes and ears. Here is rightfully deserved hero worship. Who knows what seed of inspiration is

piece of work. Gilbert Wilson has had a story to tell and he has told it well and convincingly.

Let the children themselves tell of their feeling about the north wall. I consider it worth while in that it carries a message to them. They are the

sown; what inclinations encouraged; what ambition fired to be fanned into a warm blaze in later years.

Children's minds are indelible and will be indelibly stamped by reaction to these pictures. When he has finished and gone, more and more children will pass up these stairs, children who did not see him work, or know him by sight. But they will see the pictures and there will be a reaction in their minds. It is interesting to get a glimpse into what this reaction will be. Here are social problems, the world as it is, too full of machinery, and graft and greed. Here is protest against war, and fascism, and economic selfishness. There is no one solution pointed out, but there are bright spots of peace, and worthy ambition suggested. What lessons will be drawn from this by all those bright eyes and eager heads as their feet go tramping up the stairs?

But before thinking of too many generations being impressed with these murals let us consider those who are watching him work. Will what he chalks upon the walls last longer in the minds of the children than will the chalk marks themselves? Yes, chalk! No government project this, no PWA work help. How sad to think these strokes so important in the making of the future of Gilbert Wilson are only chalk. If they mean anything to him or to the children for whom they are made it is regrettable they are in such a temporary media.

How great or how poor they are is not for me (or you) to judge. It is a matter of what they mean to the children for whom they are made. But I can't resist expressing my admiration for the fine tribute he has paid to those who have influenced and encouraged him in his work, so beautifully portrayed on the south wall. Many there are who may in the future pay him tribute—tribute of a beautiful memory if nothing more. I can't help but express my joy at his fine praise of Mr. Turman. There he stands in the centre of the mural, aloof from the chaotic upheaval and social dilemma of the world; he is in the sun but not basking. The very flick of his tie shows him to be bristling with activity and ambition. I can't say too much in praise of the south mural. It is an enterprising

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Gilbert Wilson's Murals

Woodrow Wilson School

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I learned that not only did Wilson work in the open where all children can see him, (he enjoys the company of all ages) but he lets them to him, ask questions which lead back to them for answers and suggestions. Here is an opportunity given children—600 lucky Club women, avail yourselves of it. Here is a mural in production, Terre Haute's own most promising mural painter. The children are slow in availing themselves of this opportunity. The knock at the door is heard, and there is much eager listening. Eager children watch him. They talk of what he is doing. They go to the cafeteria, sit at the tables—all eyes and ears. Here is a man who has fully deserved heroic worship. He knows what seed of inspiration

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Tribune Dec. 20-36

May 10-36

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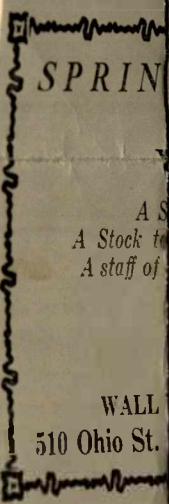
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ones for whom it was made. If they derive inspiration from it well enough. The working drawing was shown without comment to a group of eighth-graders. Here are some of their remarks:

"The idea of the mural is to show what we have to offer youth in the way of machinery, and scientific study. It also expresses what the modern world is like."

"The picture shows the youth that there are things yet for him to do."

"It shows chains, links and bars broken. And I think it shows machinery and scientific things will break but youth will never fail or break."

"The picture is representing the knowledge of science. The figure with six hands is science. The man by the figure is representing the world. Science is helping mankind to understand things. Every hand leads to some machinery. The machinery stands for things that science thinks the world should know."

"The big man in the picture looks as if he is a great master leading the boy onward to the science of the future."

"The man with the arms is God, who is teaching the youth the value of industry to the earth."

In the next issue of the Bulletin Gilbert Wilson's own description of the south wall mural will appear. It is a piece of literature, and though you do not have the mural at your side to see as you read it is none the less interesting, and you may take your Bulletin with you to the mural—Mohammed and the mountain.

In closing I shall say true to the nature of this artist, Gilbert Wilson has not forgotten his parents. Their loyalty and efforts and sacrifices have not gone in vain. Without their help there would not even have been chalk with which to work. And I am sure the school board is pleased that they were far seeing enough to permit this experiment of murals—a thing new indeed to schools of Terre Haute.

Within a few weeks we believe that there will be a public unveiling of this work. Our sincere hopes are that this unveiling will be a tremendous success! It is his biggest stepping stone. May it carry him far!

—Marion H. Gray

ARTISTS (C.W.V.)





GENESIS—PRODUCTION.

Gilbert

These are two murals by Gilbert Wilson, young Terre Haute art.  
Wawasee hotel, by Gilbert Wilson, young Terre Haute art.  
Above is Genesis, representing production, and below is  
Exodus, representing destruction. Study 'em out for yourself.

REFERENCE  
DO NOT CIRCULATE



EXODUS—DESTRUCTION.

(over)